DISCUSSION PAPER ON INFORMAL/UNREGULATED CHILD CARE AND PARENTING SUPPORT SERVICES IN METROPOLITAN TORONTO

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MUNICIPALITY OF METROPOLITAN TORONTO
Community Services and Housing Committee
Steering Committee - Informal/Unregulated Child Care and Parenting Support Services Project

March 21, 1985

Dear Member of the Metropolitan Community:

Attached please find a copy of the discussion paper on Informal/Unregulated Child Care and Parenting Support Services in Metropolitan Toronto. The paper is being widely distributed to encourage public input through a community consultation process.

A public forum will be held on May 1, 1985. The forum will allow all interested individuals and representatives of organizations to appear in person and present their comments and opinions on the items in the discussion paper. Individuals are encouraged to make deputations at the public forum (please register with Metropolitan staff indicated below to reserve a time). Day care will be provided on-site free of charge beginning at 6:00 p.m. (please register for space(s) by April 22, 1985).

Written submissions, in response to the discussion paper, are also encouraged. Individuals wishing to make both a written submission and a deputation should send their submission early enough to allow copies to be made and distributed to all members of the Steering Committee prior to the forum.

Inquiries, registrations for deputations and day care at the public forum, and written submissions should be directed to Martin Herzog (947-8614) or Laurie McQueen (947-8684) at the Policy and Planning Division of the Metropolitan Community Services Department, City Hall, Toronto.

Yours truly,

FERGY BROWN
Controller, City of York
Steering Committee Chairman

NOTICE OF PUBLIC FORUM

On Informal/Unregulated Care and Parenting Support in Metropolitan Toronto

A public forum has been scheduled for:

Wednesday, May 1, 1985
4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
Council Chambers, New City Hall, City of Toronto.

Day care, free of charge, will be provided on-site beginning at 6:00 p.m. for persons registering for space(s) before April 22, 1985.

Inquiries concerning the Discussion Paper, written submissions, and registrations for deputations and day care at the public forum should be directed to:

Martin Herzog
947-8614

Laurie McQueen
947-8684

Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto
Community Services Department
Policy and Planning Division
City Hall, Toronto
M5H 2N1

MEMBERS OF PROJECT TEAM

Steering Committee
(Members of the Metropolitan Community Services and Housing Committee)

Fergy Brown, Controller, City of York (Steering Committee Chairman)
Joanne Campbell, Alderman, City of Toronto (C.S.H.C. Chairman)
Barbara Greene, Controller, City of North York
Chris Stockwell, Controller, City of Etobicoke

Staff Team

Shirley Hoy, Director, Policy & Planning Division
Marna Ramsden, Director, Children's Services Division
Laurie McQueen, Policy Development Officer, Policy & Planning Division
Martin Herzog, Assistant Policy Development Officer, Policy & Planning Division

Resource Team

Jan Crowle, Director, Program Support, Social Services Division
Maureen Edgar, Community Development Officer, Policy & Planning Division
Dr. Darlene Hall, Parenting Education Work Group, Rotary Creche
Dr. Eilene McIntyre, Metro Children's Advisory Group
Ruth Weisbrod, Executive Co-ordinator, Metro Children's Advisory Group

CONTENTS

	Page
GENERAL INTRODUCTION	1
FORMAL/REGULATED DAY CARE	1
(1) Introduction	1
(2) Description of Programs/Service	2
(a) Role of the Federal Government	2
(b) Role of the Provincial Government	2
(c) Role of Municipalities	3
SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL CHILD CARE SUPPORT PROGRAMS	3
(1) Introduction	3
(2) Description of Programs/Service	4
(3) Issues	5
(4) Options	5
INFORMAL/UNREGULATED CHILD CARE	5
(1) Introduction	5
(2) Description of Programs/Service	6
(a) Extent of the Unregulated Child Care Network	6
(b) Subsidized Unregulated Care Under the ESI Program	7
(3) Issues	8
(4) Options	8
PARENTING SUPPORT SERVICES	11
(1) Introduction	11
(2) Description of Programs/Service	11
(a) Definitions/Types of Support Services	12
(i) Family Support	12
(ii) Parenting Support	13
(iii) Parenting Education	13
(b) Parenting Support as Prevention Services	14
(3) Issues	15
APPENDIX I: DEFINITIONS OF CHILD CARE TERMS	19
APPENDIX II: DEFINITIONS/TYPES OF FAMILY SUPPORT, PARENTING SUPPORT AND PARENTING EDUCATION SERVICES BY SOURCE	20
APPENDIX III: EXTENT OF THE PARENTING SUPPORT NETWORK ACROSS METROPOLITAN TORONTO	23
APPENDIX IV: SUMMARY OF METROPOLITAN FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND PARENTS	24
APPENDIX V: BIBLIOGRAPHY	25

DISCUSSION PAPER ON INFORMAL/UNREGULATED CHILD CARE AND PARENTING SUPPORT SERVICES IN METROPOLITAN TORONTO

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Community Services and Housing Committee of Metropolitan Toronto, at its meeting on September 13, 1984, directed staff of the Community Services Department to identify an appropriate role for Metropolitan Toronto regarding informal/unregulated child care. The Committee, at its meeting on May 10, 1984, requested the Department to examine an appropriate role for Metropolitan Toronto with respect to parenting support services. Public consultations were to form part of both initiatives.

As a first step in satisfying these requirements, this discussion paper was prepared for distribution to all interested individuals and community organizations throughout the Metropolitan community. The paper provides background information, including the development of definitions for specific types of programs and services, an outline of issues and, where appropriate, options available for a Metropolitan Toronto role.

Four interrelated categories of child care and support services are covered in the discussion paper:

- o formal/regulated day care - regulated under Ontario's Day Nurseries Act;
- o social and recreational child care support programs - subject only to regulations and standards of the individual program sponsors;
- o informal/unregulated child care - not subject to any regulatory control;
- o parenting support services - services supporting the above categories of care.

The second step of the community consultation process will take place through a public forum to allow interested individuals and organizations to present their comments and views. This paper will form the basis of the agenda for the public forum. Written submissions in response to the discussion paper will also be encouraged.

FORMAL/REGULATED DAY CARE

(1) Introduction

In Ontario, child care is provided both through formal/regulated arrangements and through informal/unregulated arrangements. Historically, government interest in day care started with the aim of enabling women to assist in the war effort. It has developed in conjunction with the provision of public assistance to persons in need and, more recently, it has broadened to encompass the provision of support for working parents and concern for the development of children. The costs of day care have been subsidized to permit parents to continue in gainful employment without placing their children at risk. To ensure that children receive suitable care, and to maintain accountability for the use of public funds, subsidies have traditionally only been provided for formal/regulated arrangements.

Eligibility for subsidized day care is determined by a needs test which documents family income and expenses, including day care costs. The costs of day care are subsidized to the extent that expenses exceed ability to pay. Otherwise, users of day care services pay per diem rates in relation to the actual costs of services received.

Subsidized and non-subsidized care arrangements, provided according to specific government regulation, have been referred to in the past by a variety of terms (e.g., formal, regulated, licensed and supervised care). Since the basic distinguishing characteristic of this type of child care is that it is provided according to a comprehensive government regulatory system, regulated day care is the term used throughout the remainder of the paper for this type of care (see definitions in Appendix I).

This brief profile of regulated subsidized day care services is not intended to concentrate public discussion upon the need for more subsidized care spaces. Instead, it is presented to:

- o outline the role already taken by Metropolitan Toronto in this area;
- o assist in distinguishing the different types of child care and support programs;
- o provide background information on the context within which possible roles for the Metropolitan government in less regulated child care services will need to be considered.

(2) Description of Programs/Service

(a) Role of the Federal Government

The Canada Assistance Plan (C.A.P.) establishes the general framework for regulated subsidized day care programs and sets conditions for the Federal Government's role in sharing in the costs of this service:

- o subsidized day care is not a mandatory program, and it is not a universally accessible program;
- o provinces must legislate the provision of the service;
- o eligibility of individuals for subsidy is to be determined by two criteria:
  . social need (as defined by C.A.P.)
  . financial need (assessed through a provincially designed test);
- o the Federal Government will share 50 per cent. of the net operating costs of all eligible subsidized day care expenses for which claims are made.

(b) Role of the Provincial Government

The role of the Province in regulated care is established by Ontario's Day Nurseries Act and Regulations, which provide further specifications for the financing, operation and administration of both subsidized and non-subsidized day care programs:

- o statutory provisions for municipal service delivery (both direct operation and purchased services);
- o a mandatory needs test for determining the eligibility of individuals for subsidized day care;

- o comprehensive operating standards for both group care and private home day care through an agency; compliance to the standards is a prerequisite for a licence and day care services in these settings may only be provided under the authority of a Provincial licence;
- o care of less than 5 children in other arrangements (discussed under section on informal/unregulated care) without a license is not prohibited by Provincial legislation;
- o The Province annually sets budget ceilings on the amounts up to which it will share 30 per cent. of the net operating costs for subsidized day care in each municipality.

(c) Role of Municipalities

Within this Provincial framework, emphasis is placed on the understanding that local communities are better suited to the determination of local needs and specific models of service delivery. Accordingly, the Province has delegated to municipalities the functions of initiating the service (e.g., initially planning and budgeting for subsidized day care) and directly operating day care programs or purchasing subsidized day care spaces from private operators. However, municipalities that become involved in the provision of subsidized day care must share 20 per cent. of the net operating costs of the service.

Metropolitan Toronto has assumed a major role in the provision and administration of a comprehensive service network throughout the Metropolitan area. A wide range of choice for families requiring subsidized day care is available through four different regulated programs with a total of 10,362 subsidized spaces (1984 data):

- o 34 day care centres directly operated by the Metropolitan government - total capacity of 2,630 subsidized spaces;
- o 270 day care centres operated privately (on a cooperative, non-profit or commercial basis) - 5,700 subsidized spaces purchased by the Metropolitan government;
- o 150 private home day care providers co-ordinated by the Metropolitan government - 300 subsidized spaces;
- o private home day care providers co-ordinated by 6 private agencies - 832 subsidized spaces purchased by the Metropolitan government;
- o a further 900 fully subsidized spaces set aside specifically for the Employment Support Initiatives Program.

SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL CHILD CARE SUPPORT PROGRAMS

(1) Introduction

A variety of institutionally-based social, recreational and developmental activities exist which contain both elements of parenting support and child care. While it is not the intent or mandate of these programs to provide child care in a legal or technical sense, they involve aspects of supervision and responsibility for the participating children on the part of the program providers and are usually regulated by the sponsoring agency. For this reason, many parents rely upon them as methods of child care. As substitutes for child care these programs may have limitations.

They usually last for only 1 to 2 hours per day and they may not operate daily. Although attendance may be taken, program responsibility may not extend to ensuring that participating children are present. On-site supervisor-child ratios in these programs usually do not satisfy the requirements for pre-school children in the Day Nurseries Act; however, the ratios usually satisfy the requirements for school-age children and they exceed board of education ratios. Under these circumstances, one area with potential application for social/recreational child care support programs is in serving school-age children (particularly for children requiring only limited periods of before or after school supervision).

(2) Description of Programs/Service

The programs usually have one or more specific objectives (apart from any child care function that they may also satisfy) including socialization, child development, education, skills development and recreation. The programs, often operated in school space or in community or recreation centres, frequently require the payment of fees. Some sponsoring agencies subsidize or waive the fees for children from families facing financial hardship.

Examples of popular programs and sponsoring agencies include:

- After Four Programs - provided by local boards of education, local municipal parks and recreation departments and, to a lesser extent, community organizations (similar programs are also run before school);
- Recreation and Arts and Crafts Programs - provided by local municipal parks and recreation departments, community organizations (such as settlement houses) and, with respect to arts/crafts, through private arrangements (i.e., tutors).
- An organization may be recognized as a private school if it provides activities which conform to the Education Act for at least 5 school-age children. A private school may then provide a program for pre-school children as well. A private school providing a program of this kind is not required to conform to the Day Nurseries Act.

The YMCA operates similar programs for school-age children in schools at numerous locations within Metropolitan Toronto. These programs differ from those offered by boards of education and parks and recreation departments as they are sometimes provided in settings licensed under the Day Nurseries Act (as part of a day care centre).

It is difficult to accurately estimate the number of social and recreational child care support programs, and the number of children served, because of the diversity of program sponsors and the limited public awareness/recognition of these programs in the past. A survey of child care arrangements (Statistics Canada) provides estimates of the extent of this service network in Ontario as of 1981. The survey suggested that lunch programs run by school boards in Ontario provided supervision for 674,000 or 58.3 per cent. of school-aged children (age 6-14). Only about 10,000 or less than 1.0 per cent. of school-age children participated in social and recreational child care support programs after school; 174,000 or 15.1 per cent. of Ontario's school-age children were unattended after school. Child care arrangements before school were not surveyed.

(3) Issues

While a number of social/recreational child care support programs also serve pre-school children, it appears that the majority of programs are directed at school-age participants. These programs have the potential to provide affordable supervision for many of the currently unattended school-age children. Serving them through these types of programs, rather than regulated day care programs, would free more regulated spaces for the care of pre-school children.

A number of community-based program sponsors operating on a non-profit basis need to charge fees to be financially viable. Some of the government agency sponsored programs offer subsidized participation, usually on the basis of need. Should the expansion of the government (subsidized) programs occur, this could adversely affect participation in the non-profit, non-subsidized programs.

(4) Options

(a) Responsibility for Program Delivery

(i) Continuation of shared responsibility between private schools, boards of education, local municipalities and community organizations;
(ii) Clarify focus of responsibility for service delivery and improve regulatory structure.

(b) Funding Role

(i) Continuation of existing system of diversified funding sources;
(ii) Defined role for the Provincial government in providing increased financial support to these programs;
(iii) Greater emphasis on Metropolitan financial support to these programs, where they meet a child care need for persons in financial need, through existing funding mechanisms and new funding programs.

INFORMAL/UNREGULATED CHILD CARE

(1) Introduction

Informal/unregulated day care refers to care that is not provided by a parent or guardian. It includes care provided in any private residence by friends, relatives, neighbours, older siblings, other babysitters and nannies. These care arrangements are not licensed by the Province; they do not have to operate according to the standards set out in the regulations made under Ontario's Day Nurseries Act(1) and they are not supervised and inspected by Metropolitan staff. Children, parents/guardians and unregulated caregivers,

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(1) This refers to unregulated care arrangements involving 5 children or less; Any caregiver caring for more than 5 children (not of common parentage) is defined as providing group care or a day care centre in the Act and therefore is subject to licensing and regulation.

however, are still subject to any relevant provisions of other legislation having general applicability (e.g., Child Welfare Act, Education Act, Young Offenders Act, Occupational Health and Safety Act, municipal by-laws).

In the past, these child care arrangements were referred to by a variety of terms that have been unclear and have led to some confusion (e.g., informal, alternate, unlicensed, interim and alternative care). Since this type of care is not provided according to a comprehensive government regulatory system (the opposite of regulated day care), the term unregulated care is used to refer to these types of care arrangements in the rest of this paper.

In contrast to regulated care, where care is provided both on a subsidized and non-subsidized (i.e., full fee paying client) basis, subsidies have not traditionally been provided for unregulated care arrangements. Recently, subsidies for unregulated care were introduced as a component of the Provincial Employment Support Initiatives Program. The Metropolitan government's interest in unregulated care is demonstrated by its initial involvement in projects under this employment program. As some experience has now been gained with subsidizing unregulated care under these projects, the Metropolitan government is interested in examining what role, if any, it should take in the area of unregulated care arrangements.

(2) Description of Programs/Service

(a) Extent of the Unregulated Child Care Network

Precisely because these care arrangements are not regulated or supervised, it is impossible to accurately determine the number of unregulated care providers or the number of children cared for through these arrangements. Nevertheless, it is widely agreed that the number of children in unregulated care arrangements far exceeds the number of children receiving care through regulated programs. Indeed, unregulated day care arrangements existed long before the establishment of regulated programs and government involvement.

A survey of child care arrangements (Statistics Canada, 1981) indicated that about 286,000 or 39.6 per cent. of preschool-age children (age 0-5) throughout Ontario were cared for in unregulated care arrangements. At the same time, there were about 74,000 regulated day care spaces in Ontario, of which about 21,000 spaces were subsidized (estimate from Ministry of Community and Social Services).

It is estimated (Statistics Canada) that in 1981 there were approximately 142,700 children between the ages of 0 to 9 in Metropolitan Toronto who were in need of child care because their parent(s)/guardian participated in the labour force. Of these children, it is estimated that more than 48,000 or 34 per cent. were eligible for subsidized day care. The number of subsidized spaces in the four regulated day care programs in Metropolitan Toronto at that time was less than 9,500.

(b) Subsidized Unregulated Care Under the ESI Program

The Provincial Employment Support Initiatives (ESI) Program was implemented by the Metropolitan Community Services Department through pilot projects beginning in January, 1983. The ESI program is designed to assist sole support parents (i.e., single parents), who are 18 years of age or over and are receiving General Welfare Assistance or Family Benefits, to enter or re-enter the labour force and achieve self-efficiency. The range of supports provided through the Metropolitan ESI projects include direct employment services (counselling, training, job search assistance), the provision of employment related expenses (transit, tuition or training fees, clothing, and the provision of child care expenses).

This has permitted the subsidization of unregulated child care arrangements as a recognized program. Under the Metropolitan ESI project, 900 subsidized spaces in the four regulated day care programs were reserved for children of ESI participants as of 1984. These subsidy costs are shared 20 per cent. by Metropolitan Toronto, 30 per cent. by the Province, 50 per cent. by the Federal Government. Another 700 children of ESI participants may receive subsidized care in unregulated arrangements. These subsidy costs are shared equally by the Provincial and Federal Governments, and no municipal contributions are required. While the per diem costs of caring for children in unregulated arrangements vary greatly, the Province has set a ceiling on subsidies for unregulated arrangements that is substantially less than the per diem costs in regulated programs. Use of unregulated care in the ESI project (up to the maximum duration for participation) is intended for the following circumstances:

- o when no regulated care is available (e.g., pending regulated care arrangements);
- o when unregulated care is the parent's choice;
- o when parent's ESI activities or work hours are irregular (e.g., evening classes, shiftwork);
- o when the child's age exceeds ten years (the maximum age for eligiblity for subsidy in regulated programs established by the Province);
- o when only short periods or occasional care are required;
- o when temporary or emergency care is required for a child who is ill or otherwise temporarily unable to attend a regulated program.

An evaluation of the operation of the ESI Program, covering all 9 Ontario municipalities in which it was implemented, was completed for the Ministry of Community and Social Services at the end of 1984. The study identified 10 major and 10 minor barriers to employment faced by participating sole support parents. The need for child care was identified as a major barrier for 36.7 per cent. of Ontario ESI participants.

Statistics for the Metropolitan ESI project and the Ontario-wide ESI evaluation both confirmed that the ESI Program has been successful in assisting participants in securing employment. As a result, ESI participants have become independent of General Welfare Assistance and Family Benefits. The provision of subsidized unregulated child care has made a significant contribution to the success of this Program.

(3) Issues

Subsidized care through unregulated arrangements has been viewed by some as having particular advantages over regulated care. Others, however, perceive greater disadvantages with unregulated care arrangements compared to regulated care.

The objectives and implications of subsidizing unregulated care, and the conditions under which it would be available, could be substantially different if it were extended beyond the ESI Program. Major factors to be considered in examining options in this area are summarized below:

- o Flexibility - unregulated caregivers can be flexible in responding to the schedules of parents and children (e.g., shift work, after school care), and meet the preference of some parents that the caregiver share their language and culture;
- o Cost - the costs of subsidizing unregulated care under the ESI Program have been kept low by Provincial ceilings and may not reflect actual costs or value; while no municipal contributions are required towards the financing of subsidized unregulated care under the ESI Program, such financial contributions would likely be required with the subsidization of unregulated care outside of the ESI Program;
- o Minimum Standards - minimum standards, indicative of quality care and an environment appropriate for the development of a child, do not apply to unregulated care; it would be difficult and expensive to screen or impose operating conditions on unregulated caregivers because of their large number/wide distribution;
- o Quality - the quality of regulated programs is facilitated by the enforcement of minimum standards; the quality of unregulated care varies and parents may have difficulty in identifying high quality unregulated care;
- o Liability - all regulated programs are covered by liability insurance while most unregulated caregivers are not; there is a concern that in the event of an accident the Municipality may be found partially liable (through legal recourse pursued by the parent in the absence of satisfactory restitution from the caregivers) since it was subsidizing the care arrangement;
- o Supply and Demand - the demand for subsidized day care far exceeds the number of spaces that can be supplied through the regulated programs, and subsidizing unregulated care arrangements may be one way to assist in meeting this demand; however, expanding the provision of subsidies for unregulated care could have a negative impact on the further development of the regulated programs, particularly the two private home day care programs.

(4) Options

(a) No Unregulated Subsidized Child Care Arrangements

Under this option, the Metropolitan Toronto government would not establish unregulated care arrangements as a regular subsidized day care program. The role of Metropolitan Toronto with respect to subsidized day care would continue to be limited to the administration of the four regulated day care programs.

(b) Subsidized Unregulated Child Care Only for ESI Participants

Under this option, the Metropolitan government would not establish unregulated care arrangements as a regular subsidized child care program. The role of Metropolitan Toronto with respect to subsidized day care would essentially be limited to the administration of the four regulated day care programs. This would not preclude involvement in providing subsidized care through unregulated arrangements as part of major initiatives to help recipients of social assistance become gainfully employed. Therefore, the Metropolitan government could continue to subsidize unregulated care through employment programs, such as the ESI Program, provided that subsidized regulated care was also an available option under such programs.

(c) Subsidized Unregulated Child Care as an Established Program

Some options for establishing a subsidized unregulated child care program include:

(i) A Regular Program

With this option, the provision of subsidies would be extended to eligible parents to have their children cared for through unregulated arrangements. Unregulated care would be established as a fifth subsidized day care program, in addition to the four regulated programs. Parents would select the program preferred for their children.

Subsidized unregulated care could be available for children up to the age of ten, as in the regulated programs, or up to the age of 12, consistent with statutory requirements for supervision of children. Care would be provided independent of Provincial licensing and standards, and independent of Metropolitan supervision. In the unregulated care program, parents would be responsible for selecting a caregiver. The qualifications of the caregiver and the quality of the care provided would be those which are satisfactory to the parents.

The per diem rate for unregulated care would be negotiated between the parents and the particular caregivers; however, a ceiling would be established by the Province on the per diem subsidies that the Metropolitan government could not exceed. Also, the Province would have budgetary control over the total number of unregulated spaces that would be subsidized, as is the case in the regulated programs.

(ii) A Limited Program: For Children on Waiting Lists for Regulated Care

Under this option, the Metropolitan government would provide subsidies for children placed in unregulated child care arrangements on a temporary basis pending the availability of a space in a regulated program. The administration of this version of an unregulated care program would be similar to that described for option (i) above, except that only those children on a waiting list for a regulated space would be eligible for temporary subsidized unregulated care. The choice of

whether to remain on the waiting list or to place a child in an unregulated care arrangement on a temporary basis would rest with the parents. Children placed in unregulated care would retain their status on the waiting list for a regulated space.

(iii) A Limited Program: For Children of Certain Ages

With this option, the provision of subsidies would be extended to eligible parents to have children of specified ages, as prescribed by the Metropolitan government, cared for through unregulated arrangements. Eligible children could include school-aged children, for whom infrequent and sporadic periods of care are required, since unregulated care arrangements are often more flexible. Otherwise, the administration of this version of an unregulated child care program would be similar to that described in option (i) above.

(d) Support Services for Parents and Unregulated Care Providers

(i) Technical Assistance

Provide professional advice and consultative support to unregulated caregivers through:

- o their participation in playgroups organized by the private home day care programs;
- o the development of an advice "hot-line";
- o developing and running basic babysitting courses;
- o providing advice and assistance through in-home consultants;
- o continuing to offer community-based training sessions on topics of interest to caregivers.

(ii) Informed Parental Choice

Continue to assist parents to make informed decisions about child care options and equip them to be their own quality-control for their child's care arrangement (i.e., discuss what constitutes "quality", provide them with a checklist of things to monitor).

(iii) Registry

Operate a registry to serve a clearing-house function (similar to the Provincial adoption registry). Parents wishing unregulated child care and unregulated caregivers may register and find each other (no referrals would be made).

(iv) Referral Service

Provide or purchase a referral service for parents which can give them information about alternatives over and above the licensed programs (e.g., day care counsellor or nanny screening and referral service).

PARENTING SUPPORT SERVICES

(1) Introduction

Many of the program initiatives currently in place in the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto include support services for children and families. Support services can generally be distinguished from those program activities which are legislatively regulated (such as day care centres), although they may be provided in conjunction with those programs. Other municipal discretionary activities include the Developmental and Social Services Grants Programs which provide funding to organizations such as child-parent centres, local neighbourhood groups and community centres to support their activities including their parenting support activities. In recent years, local governments have received increased numbers of requests from such community-based organizations unable to secure stable core program funding.

Many regulated day care programs (centres and private home) are developing aspects of parenting support and education activities. The Municipality's recent participation in the Provincial Employment Support Initiatives program has prompted interest in the support services that are available or needed by parents and others involved in the care of children.

A factor common to all parenting support initiatives is that no one level of government has the legislated responsibility to provide program funding, development, monitoring and assessment functions which are in place for other, recognized fields of service. Formal organizations which offer parenting support services often do so in response to the obvious needs their clients have over and above the regular (non-parenting) programs and stated service mandates. As a result, these parenting support services are the most vulnerable to funding cut-backs, staff turnovers and other organizational demands. At times of great economic and social strains on families and organizational resources, the need for support services increases while the ability of agencies to provide services beyond crises intervention decreases.

(2) Description of Programs/Service

Various types of support programs established to assist families and children are gaining in their visibility and numbers at the neighbourhood level through voluntary, non-profit and self-help groups. These services are also, however, increasingly being developed as primary prevention programs by formal organizations in addition to their traditional focus on treatment services. Public health departments, family service agencies, child welfare and mental health organizations as well as educational institutions and places of business are making support services available to clients/the public/workers. This trend is occurring across Canada and is leading to a recognition, by service providers and the public alike, that this is an emerging field of service deserving of more public attention and research.

Described alternatively and most commonly by one or more of the terms Family Support, Parenting Support or Parenting Education, these categories of services are nevertheless not understood or applied in a consistent manner between the different service sectors. In a 1984 study conducted by Pearl Karal for the Ontario Ministry of Education entitled, Parenting Education for the Young: A Literature Survey, Ms. Karal writes that,

> "Definitions (of parenting programs) may vary, in part, according to the mandates of various volunteer and social (health, education, business, etc.) agencies. The particular areas of skill possessed by the various professional disciplines tend to direct those agencies towards the provision of those types of services and education that are highly developed in the particular professions...For example, social (service) agencies tend to emphasize communication skills and role analysis; public health nurses tend to emphasize nutrition, safety and the health care of mother and child pre- and post-natally. These skills form starting points for contact. As the professionals become more experienced, they broaden their scope to include other sub-topics..."

The difficulty of settling on clearly defined service types, goals and methods for Family Support, Parenting Support and Parenting Education categories is a problem which occurs within sectors as well as between sectors. There is a need to clarify, distinguish and operationally define the terms.

(a) Definitions/Types of Support Services

Based on an extensive review of literature and on discussions with a variety of providers, a chart of Definitions has been developed by sector for the categories of service known as Family Support, Parenting Support and Parenting Education. This chart is attached as Appendix II and illustrates the variety of interpretations and definitions associated with each service category.

A comparison of the findings is extremely useful in considering the service philosophies of the organizational sources as well as in creating, for the purpose of this paper, a single set of definitions. The following definitions have been selected with the goal of clarifying and distinguishing target populations, program focus, purpose of services and examples of service types, for each category of support.

(i) Family Support

- Family Support is defined as the provision of the broadest possible range of social, material and psychological supports available to a family throughout its life-cycle.
- Its purpose is to maintain or increase the well-being of the family unit. Services may be provided for the whole family, parents or children.
- Services tend to be offered through formal methods of delivery, with professional assistance.

- o Examples of service types include teen-parent groups; marital preparation/maintenance; child-care services; family counselling; housing assistance; tax and policy concerns; etc. Some of these can be confused with parenting support services because they may be offered primarily to parents, but they differ by their intent or objective.
- o Family Support can be considered to encompass Family Life Education services (see #3 on Appendix II).

(ii) Parenting Support

- o Parenting Support is defined as the provision of a wide range of social, material and psychological supports to parents and other caregivers specific to different times in their life-cycles.
- o Its purpose is to assist parents and other caregivers in their rearing and caring of children. Some programs are designed for the participation of parents/caregivers and children together whilst others do not include children.
- o Services tend to be offered through informal methods of delivery. A higher incidence of social networking and self-help groups occurs than in Family Support. Professional expertise may or may not be available.
- o Examples of service types include child-parent centres; discussion groups for isolated parents/caregivers; child-care relief; referral and information; drop-in centres; etc.
- o Parenting Support Services can be considered to encompass Parenting Education services.

(iii) Parenting Education

- o Parenting Education is defined as the provision of services which provide specific knowledge and/or skill acquisition by parents or other caregivers at different times in their life-cycles.
- o Its purpose is to promote and increase competence in parenting attitudes, behaviours and abilities which positively influence the development and functioning of a child. Some programs are designed for the participation of both parent/caregiver and children whilst others do not include children.
- o Services tend to be offered through professional expertise, although the method of delivery may be formal or informal.
- o Examples of service types include pre- and post-natal classes; play guidance and child-care techniques; nutrition and food preparation; lectures and films on child development with subsequent question and answer periods; etc.

Each of Family Support, Parenting Support and Parenting Education Services may include programs geared towards prevention, treatment or rehabilitation services (2); long-term or short-term services; and services offered community-wide or targetted to specific groups (for example, a Parenting Support service may be targetted to all single-mothers and children in a specific neighbourhood, or a Parenting Education service may be targetted to all expectant parents across Metropolitan Toronto).

(b) Parenting Support as Prevention Services

The present-day economic and social stresses on families are well documented in other reports and need not be repeated here. Institutions and community-based groups are playing a greater role in sharing the tasks of child-rearing in order to prevent and/or reduce cases of dysfunction. Although programs of prevention have often concentrated on treatment or rehabilitative services to address the highest-risk families, primary prevention is now recognized as a more cost-effective way of providing services over the long-run.

Support programs in the United States like Head Start; Home Start; the Child and Family Resource Program; and Parent Child Development Centres demonstrated that long-lasting benefits accrue from preventive interventions during a child's early years. It was found 5 and 12 years later, that program graduates required less special education and remedial work; needed fewer social services for emotional and behavioural disorders; had better health; lower absenteeism; and scored higher on intelligence tests than their counterparts who did not take part in the programs. These results were achieved in large part due to the significant financial support received by the programs. In 1977, an amount of $475,000,000.00 was allocated to serve 349,000 poor children and families representing 15% of the eligible population. In the following year, an amount of $150,000,000.00 was added to the program in order to serve 23 per cent. of the eligible population, and so on in subsequent years.

Primary prevention programs offer participants:

- Support before serious problems are displayed.
- Assistance without restrictive 'intake' criteria in a non-threatening, accessible setting.
- The opportunity for participants to contribute their own skills and ideas to program development and/or management.

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(2) In the Ministry of Community and Social Services' report on Primary Prevention Initiatives in Children's Services, July 1984, it is noted that there are three levels of prevention services. Primary prevention describes those services which aim at reducing new cases of breakdown or harmful behaviours; Treatment services (i.e. Secondary prevention) aim at reducing the prevalence/number of existing cases through early identification and active treatment; Rehabilitation services (i.e. Tertiary prevention) aim at reducing the after-effects or patterns of disorders/dysfunctions. It is further noted that there are types of programs most commonly associated with the three levels of Prevention namely, community-wide programs, milestone programs and high-risk programs respectively.

- o Access to professional services and staff guidance when required.
- o A stronger sense of self, and a greater ability to contribute to their communities.

The establishment of drop-in centres, child-parent groups, toy-lending and resource centres - all parenting support services - often originates from voluntary community groups composed of neighbourhood residents and concerned citizens. Programs such as these perform a critical role and actually supersede the number and breadth of parenting support programs offered through formal (institutional, agency, government) settings.

(3) Issues

With respect to Parenting Support Service programs, the major issues include: funding sources and jurisdictional responsibility; equitability of service distribution; program structure and delivery; and the relationship between parenting support services and unregulated caregivers. Data to support and expand upon the following discussion can be found in Appendix III.

(a) Funding and Jurisdiction

Parenting support organizations generally experience serious funding difficulties (3). There is no single government level or other jurisdiction with the primary responsibility for developing, funding and monitoring these services. Rather, parenting support services rely on obtaining funding from a variety of sources such as foundations, formal agency sponsors, municipalities, the Province and, in some cases, voluntary sector funders and/or the Federal government. The characteristics of funding for parenting support groups are as follows:

- o Most of the funding received typically supports specific, time-limited projects, research studies, or pilot programs.
- o There is no guarantee of ongoing program funding since the services are not mandated by legislation and are usually not specified in the service mandates of sponsoring agencies.
- o The majority of parenting support services are voluntary, community-based programs engaged in a constant search for funding to cover their operating costs.

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(3) An exception may be the twelve projects across Metropolitan Toronto which received sustaining funding under the Informal Care Initiatives Program of the Ministry of Community and Social Services in 1983. Again, terminology of service types poses a problem since the groups receiving this funding are referred to as 'Family Resource Centres'. In this paper, they are referred to more specifically as information centres, community centres, child-parent centres, drop-in centres, etc.

- The primary source of funding for core administrative and community outreach activities is the Metropolitan Social Service Grants program (4). It is recognized that this funding alone is not sufficient to support the core activities of the groups (5). The limited municipal tax-base leaves little room for expansion of the grants programs presently in place.
- An inadequate funding base for staffing, overhead, publicity and outreach activities results in frequent closure of parenting support organizations.

Question for Discussion

Which jurisdiction should have the primary responsibility for developing, funding and monitoring parenting support services? For example:

- The Province
  - Ministry of Community and Social Services, i.e. Prevention Services Unit; Informal Day Care Initiatives Program
  - Ministry of Education
  - Ministry of Health
- The Municipality
  - existing grants programs, Social Service Grants and Developmental Grants (i.e., status quo)
- The voluntary sector
  - charitable foundations
  - parent/user fees
- Other
  - combined Provincial/Municipal cost-sharing
  - direct subsidies to parents from government(s)

(b) Equitability of Service Distribution

There is an inequitable distribution of parenting support programs across Metropolitan Toronto. Most accommodate neighbourhood needs and are delivered in a variety of local locations such as schools, community centres, storefront settings.

- Almost one-third of all parenting support programs are located in the City of Toronto.
- The Municipality's limited grants programs tend to direct more support to the longer-established programs in the City.
- Most parenting support services are neighbourhood specific and do not have locations across the Metropolitan area.
- Parenting support services tend to operate in isolation from one another given that they do not have a common sponsoring organization or jurisdiction responsible for their functioning and funding.
- Co-ordination and networking around mutual issues and needs is extremely difficult for parenting support organizations without external assistance.

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(4) Further information on the Metropolitan grants programs is contained in Appendix IV.

(5) The Report of the Liaison Committee on Neighbourhood Support Services found that a typical neighbourhood-based organization required approximately $60,000.00 annually for core activities, Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, March 14, 1984, page 8.

Question for Discussion

How can an equitable distribution of parenting support services be developed across Metropolitan Toronto? For example:

- o funders develop priorities of locations for new services based on needs assessments;
- o parenting groups, in conjunction with relevant service sectors, interest groups and coalitions, develop a network for referral and registry purposes.

(c) Program Structure and Delivery

Longitudinal studies conducted in the United States (6) have shown that the most benefits accrue from parenting/family support programs where children and their caregivers actively participate together. Furthermore, it has been shown that the presence of trained professionals, parent-aides, paraprofessionals and volunteers is critical to impart parenting education skills, group guidance and interaction and child-care techniques. There is a need to promote these program structures and delivery methods wherever feasible.

- o Staffing levels and salaries have traditionally been minimal due to insufficient funding bases.
- o Training of group leaders has tended to be in the setting of the program itself rather than through structured methods of training.
- o Staff and volunteers spend many unpaid hours contributing to the service needs of participants and the resource needs of the parenting support organizations. Some organizations have difficulty in recruiting volunteers and in meeting the salary costs expected by professionals.
- o Parenting support programs tend to be a combination of formats and activities with participants benefiting from a variety of styles, approaches and content.
- o No single jurisdiction monitors and assesses program quality, staff training levels, effectiveness of particular services, etc.

Question for Discussion

How can social agencies, governments and parenting support groups co-operate to establish greater opportunities for training and participation in, access to, and advocacy for, parenting services? For example:

- o combining levels of training (professional, volunteer, etc.) within programs;
- o improving participation in and access to services through home-based support programs;
- o ensuring safe, high-quality care through innovative and improved resource allocations.

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(6) See Appendix V, Bibliography.

(d) The Relationship to Unregulated Care

It is known that unregulated caregivers of children are also participating in a number of parenting support programs but the incidence, frequency, and their reasons for attending are not known. There is a need to determine whether different programs and supports are required for caregivers other than parents of the child in care. The value of offering support programs in the homes of parents and unregulated caregivers as an additional method of delivery should also be considered. Home-based programs would likely be geared towards instruction for specific skills - acquisition such as nutrition, play techniques and others, i.e., parenting education activities.

- More than one-third of parenting support sessions are offered in the evening hours which suggests that many of the parents are at a place of business during the day. It would be helpful to determine the statistics on parents and other caregivers attending daytime programs. The other caregivers would largely be unregulated but may also include regulated private home providers.
- Studies in the United States indicate that caregivers other than parents require different support programs since they do not as readily engage in creative play techniques, intense affection and individualized attention with the children.
- Parents express a high desire for unregulated caregivers to be trained in child-care and parenting skills. The only factor more important to parents than training is that caregivers have experience in raising their own children.
- Unregulated caregivers may have difficulties in attending parenting support programs due to transportation problems, an inability to pay (even) low fees, program location, for example. These problems may also occur for parents and regulated private home day care providers.

Question for Discussion

Which jurisdiction should take a leadership role in providing support programs for unregulated caregivers? By what manner can unregulated providers best be identified and provided with parenting information and access to programs? For example:

- registry of unregulated caregivers;
- public relations and outreach campaign;
- parent-aides, in-home consultants and paraprofessionals;
- specific programs for non-parental caregivers.

APPENDIX I

DEFINITIONS OF CHILD CARE TERMS

Regulated Day Care

Publicly or privately provided day care, licensed under the Day Nurseries Act and provided pursuant to the provisions of the Act and Regulations, where

(a) Group Care or Day Care Centre

Means a premises that receives more than five children who are not of common parentage, primarily for the purpose of providing temporary care, or guidance, or both temporary care and guidance, for a continuous period not exceeding twenty-four hours, where the children are,

(i) under eighteen years of age in the case of a day nursery for children with a developmental handicap, and
(ii) under ten years of age in all other cases,

but does not include,

(iii) part of a public school, separate school, private school or a school for trainable retarded children under the Education Act, or
(iv) a place that is used for a program of recreation and that is supervised by a municipal recreation director who holds a certificate issued pursuant to Section 10 of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation Act, or
(v) a children's mental health centre under the Children's Mental Health Services Act.

(b) Supervised Home Day Care

Means the temporary care for reward or compensation of five children or less who are under ten years of age where such care is provided in a private residence, other than the home of a parent or guardian of any such child, for a continuous period not exceeding twenty-four hours.

Social and Recreational Child Care Support Programs

A variety of institutionally-based social, recreational and developmental activities provided both by public and private organizations. It is not the intent or mandate of these programs to provide child care in a legal or technical sense, and they are not regulated under the Day Nurseries Act. They do involve an aspect of supervision and responsibility for participating children in settings that are subject to any regulations of the respective program sponsor.

Unregulated Child Care

Child care provided in any private residence where the care provided is not regulated or supervised pursuant to the provisions of the Day Nurseries Act and Regulations. It includes babysitting and child care provided by friends, relatives, neighbours, older siblings and nannies.

February 1985

APPENDIX II
DEFINITIONS/TYPES OF FAMILY SUPPORT
PARENTING SUPPORT AND PARENTING
EDUCATION SERVICES BY SOURCE

SOURCE	DEFINITIONS/TYPES OF SERVICES
1. Ministry of Community and Social Services Study - Family Support Measures in Child Welfare	A. FAMILY SUPPORT Family Support is defined as the provision of social support to a family unit with the goals of preventing child maltreatment, enabling a family to cope with child care responsibilities and re-establishing and supporting children within a natural family setting. (The report recognizes and distinguishes among a full range of treatments, techniques and concepts such as social supports; social resources; social networks; home-care and self-help, for example. It also recognizes that there are formal and informal sources of the activities. NOTE: The emphasis of this report is upon formal child welfare organizations). B. PARENTING SUPPORT C. PARENTING EDUCATION Although not specifically defined in this report, both of these categories of services are considered to be sub-groups of Family Support Programs, i.e. may be one of or a combination of the seven major groupings of types of supports.
2. Ministry of Education Parenting Education for the Young: A Literature Survey	A. FAMILY SUPPORT Educators most frequently use the term Family Life Education for the field of studies related to what other sectors may call Family Support. This commonly includes, as topics, components of child care; physical, social and emotional development of children and adolescents; roles and inter-relationships among family members; and the lifestyles and values of adults. The goal is to assist students to become aware of both the teaching process and their own learning processes of which preparation for parenthood is one significant segment. Family topics focus on the social unit. B. PARENTING SUPPORT - not addressed C. PARENTING EDUCATION - 'Parenthood' is regarded as a state, not as a field of study. - The term 'parenting education' is unknown to most teachers. The author of the report offers a definition of parenting as, "the learning, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours which influence the development and functioning of a child." The purpose of parenting education is proposed to impart: 1) Factual Information - recognized as having a limited influence on behaviour; 2) Rational Information - where concepts such as responsibility and decision-making are introduced; and 3) Attitude and Character Development. (NOTE: This report places the emphasis upon youngsters' and adolescents' learning of parenting and family skills (primarily) in a school setting.)

DEFINITIONS/TYPES OF FAMILY SUPPORT
PARENTING SUPPORT AND PARENTING
EDUCATION SERVICES BY SOURCE

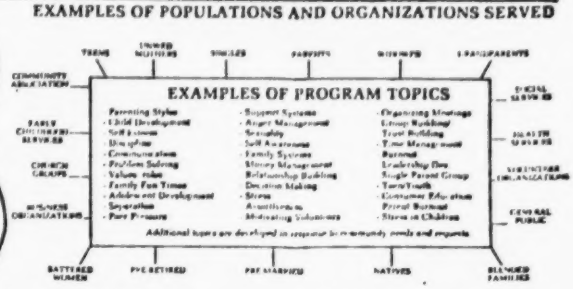
SOURCE	DEFINITIONS/TYPES OF SERVICES

3. Family Life Education Council of Calgary

A. FAMILY SUPPORT

B. PARENTING SUPPORT

C. PARENTING EDUCATION



The Council considers the term Family Life Education to encompass all of the above.

The Council is funded by the Province of Alberta under the (Preventive) Social Services Legislation with assistance from Advanced Education; Further Education Services; and donations. Its logo is "Helping People Learn Relationship Skills".

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4. Vanier Institute on Family Studies, Ottawa

A. FAMILY SUPPORT
Family Support Services are considered to be the broadest possible range of supports available throughout the life-cycle of a family. This includes marital preparation; teen/parent support groups; Family Life Education programs; child-care services; tax and policy concerns, etc.

B. PARENTING SUPPORT
Parenting support services are more focused on topic areas specific to different times in the life-cycle than are family support services. They tend to be more informal in their methods of delivery including more social networking and self-help types of groups.

C. PARENTING EDUCATION
The most specific term of the three, parenting education, refers to an information transferrral process on specific skills to be acquired by participants in the raising of children. It is normally associated with delivery through professional expertise.

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5. Ministry of Community- and Social Services Study - Report on Primary Prevention Initiatives in Children's Services

A. FAMILY SUPPORT
Refers to and uses the term Family Support as per the Ministry study in #1 above, The Nature and Effectiveness of Family Support Measures.

B. PARENTING SUPPORT
C. PARENTING EDUCATION

Both of these would be considered as preventive intervention programs. The term Parenting Support is not mentioned, but Parenting Education programs are specifically referred to. They are described as programs which help parents understand what behaviours can be expected from children at certain stages of development and how, in concrete terms, they might deal with child-rearing issues.

(NOTE: This study defines 3 levels of prevention, but has one meaning for the term prevention, while using the terms treatment and rehabilitation for the remaining two prevention levels. Preventive interventions are identified for stages of childrens' and adults' lives. The programs are voluntary with a distinct de-emphasis on participants being clients. Interventions are designed for target group populations and communities rather than individual cases. The purpose of an intervention is to provide or enhance social supports and/or enhance competence or coping skills.)

DEFINITIONS/TYPES OF FAMILY SUPPORT
PARENTING SUPPORT AND PARENTING
EDUCATION SERVICES BY SOURCE

SOURCE	DEFINITIONS/TYPES OF SERVICES
6. Public Health Units/ Departments, Metro Toronto area	A. PARENTING EDUCATION Referred to as 'Prenatal and Parenthood Education Services', public health nurses teach classes to expectant parents on the experiences of pregnancy, childbirth and adjustments to early parenthood. In addition, classes geared specifically for teen mothers; early pregnancy; cesarean births and for review are available (in a variety of languages). The group maintains contact and working relationships with a number of nursing, prenatal and breastfeeding educators.
7. Edmonton Social Planning Council, 1968,1984	A. PARENTING EDUCATION Programs which have a positive influence on parents' level of competence through: a) helping parents to understand the impact of child-parent relationships in terms of the total development of the child; and b) assisting parents to understand and cope with the forces in the community which have an interplay with those within the family.
8. Other Sources (agencies,organizations)	The following definitions are very narrow as used within specific agencies. They serve as further examples of widely differring definitions. A. FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS A group where both parents (or other caregivers) and children participate in programs together. B. PARENTING SUPPORT PROGRAMS Targetted to specific groups of parents, for example, a group for single-mothers only.
9. Profile for Preliminary Directory of Professionals Promoting Parent Education in Canada, Barbara Helm, Consultant Health & Welfare Canada, 1984-85	A. FAMILY SUPPORT B. PARENTING SUPPORT } These are considered to be particular sub-topics/interests for professionals engaged in parenting education. C. PARENTING EDUCATION Not specifically defined, but is very global in nature including parent target groups with children from pre-natal to 20-years plus; strategies ranging from individual attention to mass media approaches and the production of support materials; and over nine possible theoretical orientations to parent education.
10. Compendium of Metro Parenting Education Resources, Parenting Education Workgroup, Fall 1984	A. FAMILY SUPPORT B. PARENTING SUPPORT } Considered to be sub-topics of the 'global' parenting education. C. PARENTING EDUCATION A list of resources offered by various voluntary, institutional and government agencies in Metropolitan Toronto was documented and takes the same global approach as Health & Welfare Canada, i.e., Parenting Education includes public health, child-parent centres, Family Life Education, Foster Parent support group programs, etc.

APPENDIX III

EXTENT OF THE PARENTING SUPPORT NETWORK ACROSS METROPOLITAN TORONTO

In 1984, the Parenting Education Workgroup documented information on parenting services across Metropolitan Toronto. Titled Compendium of Metro Parenting Education Resources, the Workgroup's use of the word "education" differs from the Definitions and Types of services developed for use in this report. The Municipality considers the term Parenting Support to encompass parenting education services/programs and not vice-versa, i.e., parenting education services are a specific sub-group of parenting support services.

An analysis of the data documented in the Compendium provides the following interesting findings:

- Self-support through charging fees or fund-raising is engaged in by more than 57 per cent. of the groups while formal institutions (like C.A.S., public health) are a source of funds in 35 per cent. of cases.
- Provincial government sources of funding are reported in 33 per cent. of cases; the Metropolitan government in 24 per cent. of cases; the Federal government in 10 per cent. of cases; and area municipalities in 2 per cent. of cases.
- Funding problems are reported by 40 per cent. of parenting groups and difficulty in reaching populations in need of their services is reported in 27 per cent. of cases. Problems with too many referrals/requests is reported 11 per cent. of the time.
- The majority of parenting support programs are short-term, lasting for 1-7 sessions in 16 per cent. of cases and 8-10 sessions in 30 per cent. of cases.
- The general public is served in 67 per cent. of cases; specialty groups in 28 per cent. of cases.
- Daytime programs account for 58 per cent. of the parenting services across Metro while evening sessions are offered in 35 per cent. of cases. A majority of programs last for only part of the day.
- In 38 per cent. of cases, sessions are attended by one or more parents and their child(ren). The category 'any parent' attending was reported in 42 per cent. of cases since some programs operate only for adults. Less than 1 per cent. are attended by couples only.
- Program presentations were offered in a support group format 77 per cent. of the time and in a lecture-discussion format 74 per cent of the time. Experiential approaches accounted for 22 per cent. of presentations and therapeutic approaches accounted for 10 per cent.
- In the majority of cases, programs were directed towards the developmental stages of infants, 44 per cent., and pre-schoolers, 46 per cent. Programs on school-age and adolescent developmental levels both occurred in about 17 per cent. of the programs. Programs geared towards the development of all age groups occurred in 20 per cent. of cases.
- Only 71 per cent. of group leaders are paid for their work and another 15 per cent. act in both a paid and volunteer capacity.
- Leaders' training was received through voluntary sector training sessions, parenting programs or as former volunteers in 56 per cent. of cases.
- The City of Toronto is where 31 per cent. of the services are located. North York contains 23 per cent. of services; Etobicoke and Scarborough each have 18 per cent. Only 7 per cent. report being located in all parts of Metropolitan Toronto.

APPENDIX IV

SUMMARY OF METROPOLITAN FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND PARENTS

	Metropolitan Social Services and Developmental Grants	
	1984	1983
Number of Agencies Providing Services to Children and Parents (Proportion of all Agencies Receiving Grants)	66 (42%)	55 (36%)
Total Value of Grants to these Agencies (Proportion of Value of Grants to all Agencies)	$ 910,212 (44%)	$ 729,634 (39%)
Number of Programs by Type of Service*, being Offered by Agencies receiving Grants:		
Parent Education, Counselling and Support Programs	28	24
Child Education and Counselling Programs	5	3
Special Needs Counselling, Social and Recreation Programs	8	5
Social, Recreation, Developmental Programs for Parents and Children	24	23
Children Summer Programs	9	10
Parent-Child Centres and Mom and Tot Programs	20	16
Parent Relief and Emergency Care Programs	2	2

*Type of services based on varying Agency definitions, and not according to standard definitions developed through Informal Care/Parenting Support Project.

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